

**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

Thursday, June 26, 2014

A meeting of the Philadelphia Board of Health was held on Thursday, June 26, 2014, in the Municipal Services Building, 1401 J.F.K. Boulevard, 14th Floor, Room 1450.

Board Members Present: Susan Schewel, NP, PhD; Donald F. Schwarz, MD, MPH; Robert G. Sharrar, MD, MSc; Yolanda A. Slaughter, DDS, MPH.

Attendees: Caroline Johnson, MD; Giridhar Mallya, MD; Jeff Moran; Don Sapatkin

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Health Commissioner and Board President Donald F. Schwarz, MD, MPH, called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. He welcomed the Board and asked the members to review the minutes of the meeting of December 12, 2013. It was moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Motion seconded. **Motion passed.**

PROPOSED AMMENDMENTS TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REGULATIONS

Dr. Caroline Johnson, Director of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Disease Control, presented the Board with proposed **Amendments to Regulations Governing the Control of Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases and Conditions (Attachment A)**. Section 6-202 of the City of Philadelphia Health Code requires health care providers and laboratories to report certain diseases and conditions to the Department of Public Health. The proposed amendments add to the list of these reportable diseases and conditions: Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis; Shiga-toxin producing strains of *Escherichia coli*, Hepatitis C, Vibriosis, and Yersiniosis. Dr. Johnson described the changes as primarily administrative and reviewed them for the Board.

Dr. Johnson noted that Babesiosis, first identified in Nantucket, Massachusetts, has travelled southward over the past several decades, and is now present in Pennsylvania. It is carried by the same tick that carries Lyme disease. Several cases in Philadelphia have been linked by department investigators to the Wissahickon section of Fairmount Park. She said that reporting of babesiosis is necessary to protect the blood supply.

The regulations pertaining to *E. coli* have been expanded to include additional reporting of additional strains that produce Shiga-toxin.

Significant changes are proposed to the regulations pertaining to Hepatitis C. Reporting of all tests will be required (including rapid tests), and the reporting of negative viral loads. This information is crucial in advising a patient about follow-up treatment where needed. Laboratories have indicated that they will be able to do this kind of reporting.

Dr. Schewel asked if the department refers people to care. Dr. Johnson said that we currently can contact residents by phone to advise them of available resources. In the future, with grant assistance, the department hopes to be able to have case workers who can work directly with patients to assist them in finding care.

Dr. Schwarz commented that the community of people who work with substance users has been a supportive participant in the department's Hepatitis C workgroup and taskforce. Their major concerns continue to be resources for treatment.

Dr. Schwarz explained that following a motion and second to approve the regulations, a vote would be taken. Approved changes are forwarded to the Records Department for a 30 day comment period. Should significant comment be forthcoming, a hearing will be held. If there is no significant comment after 30 days, the regulations will be adopted.

Dr. Schewel moved to approve the regulations. Motion seconded. **Motion passed.**

PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Dr. Giridhar Mallya, Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Director of Policy and Planning, updated the Board on the progress of the department's application to the Public Health Accreditation Board. The first part of the application has been submitted, including the Community Health Assessment, the Community Health Improvement Plan, and the Strategic Plan, and the second part will be submitted in January of 2015. A mock site visit is being held in September in preparation for an actual site visit by the Board that will take place during the summer of 2015.

REVIEW OF DATA ON YOUTH SMOKING

Dr. Mallya reviewed with Board data pertaining to the use of tobacco products by young people in Philadelphia (**Attachment B**). The primary finding is that youth smoking in the city declined by 30% since 2007—at a rate higher than the U.S. as a whole.

Dr. Sharrar asked if there is any ongoing effort to increase cigar tax in Philadelphia. Dr. Mallya said that while that would be a positive measure, current efforts are concentrated on the authorization of a City tax on cigarettes. He reported that City Council passed the tax one year ago, but the State has yet to pass authorizing legislation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Schwarz announced that Dr. Marla Gold will be returning as a member of the Board.

He reported that the City's annual budget has been completed and that there is progress in the development of the State budget.

Dr. Sharrar noted that during the Board meeting of December 12, 2013, following presentations pertaining to dental amalgam, Dr. Schwarz had asked representatives of Consumers for Dental Choice and the Philadelphia County Dental Society to recommend an additional expert on dental amalgam and composite restorations. Dr. Sharrar asked if these recommendations had been made.

Dr. Schwarz said that a recommendation had not yet been provided and that the Board would be presented with additional information on this issue when it became available.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.